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THE RACES OF THE WHITE-THROATED FLY-
CATCHER WARBLER [*ABROSCOPUS SUPER-*
CILIARIAS (BLYTH)]

BY H. G. DEIGNAN¹

Through the kindness of the authorities of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, the American Museum of Natural History, the Chicago Natural History Museum, and the Museum of Comparative Zoology, I have been able to add to the series of the white-throated flycatcher warbler in the United States National Museum to make a grand total of 125 adult specimens.

Despite the long series brought together, it will be seen that the number of localities represented is extraordinarily small. This may be explained in part by the accidents of collecting, but also reflects the fact that this bird, as a *species* ranging so widely over the Indo-Chinese and Malaysian Subregions, is evidently wholly absent from extensive areas (*viz.*, eastern and southeastern Siam, Moyen- and Bas-Laos, Cambodia, Cochinchine), while common enough in others. The explanation of its discontinuous distribution will almost certainly prove to be connected with the distribution(s) of the one or more species of bamboo, with haulms neither too large nor too small in diameter, upon which the bird's year-round economy depends. Since the ornithological collector will rarely have the botanical knowledge to identify the bamboo(s) concerned, the problem's elucidation perhaps lies far in the future; it may be noted here, however, that, in northern Siam, several of my own specimens are known to have been taken in the great brakes of "mai bong" (*Bambusa tulda*) that are frequent, especially in the more eastern provinces.

Under the circumstances, it is not surprising that a number of local races should have developed, although the subspecific characters are sometimes so subtle that they cannot readily be perceived in limited material. In my series, variation appears in the color tones of pileum, mantle, and abdomen, in the degree of development of a white mesial area on the abdomen, and in length of wing (without regard to sex). General coloration tends to become duller and paler with wear, but seems not to alter appreciably with age of specimen.

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1. *Abroscopus superciliaris albigularis* (Blyth)

Abornis albigularis "Jerd. & Blyth" Blyth, Proc. Zool. Soc. London for 1861, pt. 2, Aug. 1861, p. 200 (Sikkim).

Abornis flaviventris Jerdon, Birds of India, vol. 2, pt. 1, 1863, p. 203 (Darjiling, Bengal). New name for *Abornis albigularis* "Jerd. & Blyth" Blyth 1861 (Sikkim), considered invalidated by *Abornis albigularis* "Hodgson" Moore 1854.

Abornis griseofrons J. E. and G. R. Gray, Catalogue of the specimens and drawings of Mammals, Birds, Reptiles, and Fishes of Nepal and Tibet, presented by B. H. Hodgson, Esq., to the British Museum, ed. 2, 1863, p. 33 (no locality given; type specimens from Nepal, *file* Bowdler Sharpe, Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum, vol. 4, 1879, p. 403).

Diagnosis.—The sinciput dark brownish gray, more or less washed with olive-green, and not clearly demarcated from the oily olive-green of the occiput, nape, and mantle; the feathers of the lower back broadly tipped with yellow to form a conspicuous rump band; the chin, throat, and uppermost breast white; the remaining underparts canary yellow, with a tendency toward a mesial area of white on the abdomen; the remiges blackish, narrowly edged with oily olive-green along the outer web; the rectrices brown, edged along the outer web with oily olive-green, along the inner web with fawn.

Wing length.—45-52 mm. (11).

Specimens examined.—SIKKIM: no definite locality (4 unsexed); BENGAL: Darjiling District: Darjiling (1 unsexed); ASSAM: Cachar District: Gunjong (2 males, 3 females), Dihunji (1 female).

Remarks.—The population of northern Cachar are, of course, not quite like topotypes of this race, but on average characters belong here rather than with the following form.

2. *Abroscopus superciliaris drasticus*, subsp. nov.

Type.—U. S. National Museum No. 265060, adult female, collected at Margherita, Lakhimpur District, Assam Province, India, on November 26, 1903, by Henry Neville Coltart (original number 4407).

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. albigularis* of Sikkim, but with the whole crown dark brownish gray, scarcely washed with olive green, and much more clearly demarcated from the color of the remaining upperparts; the nape and mantle oily olive-green, strongly suffused with golden, to give a very different general coloration; the yellow of the rump band and the posterior underparts more golden.

Wing length.—42-50 mm. (14).

Specimens examined.—ASSAM: Lakhimpur District: Margherita (2 males, 7 females, 1 unsexed); BURMA: Upper Chindwin District: Tawmaw (1 male), Hai Bum (1 male), Nanyaseik (1 female); SIAM: Southwestern Siam: 40 mi. E. of Ban Um Phang (1 unsexed).

Remarks.—The bird from southwestern Siam, almost a topotype of *A. s. superciliaris*, is so distinct from 39 specimens of *superciliaris* and matches so exactly the most highly colored examples of *drasticus*, that I am compelled to list it here. It was collected on February 9, 1924, and might be considered a winter straggler.

3. *Abroscopus superciliaris smythiesi*, subsp. nov.

Type.—Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia No. 137723, adult female, collected at Dudaw Taung, elev. 2,133 ft., Pakokku District, Magwe Division, Burma, on February 8, 1938, by Gerd Heinrich (original number 1393).

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. albigularis* of Sikkim, but with the sin-ciput and vertex a paler and much less brownish gray, slightly washed with olive green, and much more clearly demarcated from the color of the remaining upperparts; the occiput, nape, and mantle a paler and purer olive-green; the yellow of the rump band and the posterior under-parts a paler canary yellow, this effect heightened below by the strong tendency toward an extensive mesial area of white on the abdomen.

Wing length.—46.52 mm. (16).

Specimens examined.—BURMA: Pakokku District; Dudaw Taung (6 males, 4 females, 4 unsexed); Thayetmyo District: no definite locality (1 male, 1 unsexed).

Remarks.—This is almost certainly the race represented by Ticehurst's single specimen from the Prome District (next south of the Thayetmyo District) which "does not quite match *flaviventris* [= *albigularis*] or yet *superciliaris* as exemplified by series from the type localities" (Journ. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc., vol. 34, 1931, p. 909).

The new form is named for Bertram Evelyn Smythies, author of "Birds of Burma."

4. *Abroscopus superciliaris superciliaris* (Blyth)

Abornis superciliaris "Tickell" Blyth, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal, vol. 28, 1859, p. 414 ("mountainous interior of the Tenasserim provinces"; type specimen from "Woods of Teewap'hado. 1100 feet," Amherst District, Tenasserim Division, Burma, *vide* Tickell, *ibid.*, p. 453).

Phyllopneste (Meyer). Subgen. *Phylloscopus* (Boié). *superciliaris* "(mihi)" Tickell, Journ. Asiat. Soc. Bengal, vol. 28, 1859 [= 1860], p. 453 ("Woods of Teewap'hado. 1100 feet," Amherst District, Tenasserim Division, Burma).

A [bornis]. *superciliaris salwinensis* Stuart Baker, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, vol. 44, Mar. 4, 1924, p. 62 (Salween District, Tenasserim Division, Burma).

Abroscopus superciliaris contii Meyer de Schauensee, Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia, vol. 98, July 10, 1946, p. 118 (Mong Len, Keng Tung State, Southern Shan States, Burma).

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. albigularis* of Sikkim, but with the whole crown dark gray, almost without brownish tinge, scarcely washed with olive green, and much more clearly demarcated from the color of the remaining upperparts; the nape and mantle a purer, less oily, olive-green.

From *A. s. drasticus*, separable by the purer gray of the crown, the much purer olive-green of the upperparts, and the less golden yellow of the rump and posterior underparts.

From *A. s. smythiesi*, separable by the deeper and more extensive gray of the crown, the deeper olive-green of the upperparts, and by the virtual absence of a white mesial area from the abdomen.

Wing length.—44.52 mm. (39).

Specimens examined.—BURMA: Myitkyina District: Myitkyina (1 male), Namaoyang (1 unsexed); Bhamo District: Mongwai (1 female); Keng Tung State: Mong Len (2 females, including type of *contii*); LAOS: Haut-Mékong Province: Nam Khueng (1 unsexed), Lo tiao (5 males, 8 females, 1 unsexed); Luang Prabang State: Taloun (2 males, 1 female); SIAM: North: Ban Nong Thong (1 unsexed), Ban Mae Tak (1 male), Ban Na Noi (1 female), Doi Mon Khwam Long (1 male), Doi Khun Tan (1 male), Doi San Ho (1 male), Doi San Pa Bong (1 unsexed), Muang Lom Sak (2 males, 2 females); Southwest: Ban Si Sawat (2 males, 3 females).

Remarks.—*A. s. salwinensis* was named under the mistaken impression that *A. s. superciliaris* had been described from Sikkim. The author himself later found it impossible to distinguish between the populations of the contiguous districts of Amherst and Salween.

A. s. contii was named after comparison with *A. s. smythiesi*, believed to represent *flaviventris* [= *albigularis*], and a small series from southwestern Siam, practically tototypes of *superciliaris*. Like de Schauensee, I lack truly topotypical material of *salwinensis*, but the form of northwestern Siam is hardly likely to differ from that of the Salween District, immediately adjacent; thus, when the northwestern Siamese bird is found to be inseparable from the original series of *contii*, it follows that *contii* must almost certainly be a synonym of *salwinensis*, which is, itself, a synonym of *superciliaris*.

The distinctions in color of the crown and upperparts relied upon by de Schauensee for separating the more northern birds from those of southwestern Siam and neighboring Tenasserim seem to me to represent only the differences between fresh plumaged winter (February 13) birds from the Shan States and worn summer (June 30-July 14) examples from southwestern Siam. The sullied white of the throat given as a character of *contii* appears in individuals of any race; it would appear to result from imperfect cleansing of blood or buccal discharges from the feathers—certainly it is associated in a majority of cases with head wounds.

The fine series from the parts of Laos adjoining northern Siam have the upperparts averaging very slightly darker, thus showing approach to the following form; they are, nevertheless, racially inseparable from *superciliaris*.

The four fresh-plumaged birds from Muang Lom Sak (Wat Pa) have the mantle more suffused with golden than any others of the series; coming from the most southeastern locality of all, they may belong to, or show approach to, a race of the eastern Siamese plateau, although the species is not yet known to occur there. For the present they may be called *superciliaris*.

5. *Abroscopus superciliaris euthymus*, subsp. nov.

Type.—American Museum of Natural History No. 290584, adult, male, collected at Pakha, elev. 3,281 ft., Laokay Province, Tongking, on December 23, 1929, by Jean Delacour and Pierre Jabouille.

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. albigularis* of Sikkim, but with the whole crown dark gray, scarcely washed with olive-green, and much more clearly

demarcated from the color of the remaining upperparts; the nape and mantle deep olive-green, darker than in any other race outside the Malaysian Subregion.

From *A. s. superciliaris*, separable by the deeper gray of the crown and the darker olive green of the upperparts.

Wing length.—45-52 mm. (16).

Specimens examined.—LAOS: 5^e Territoire Militaire: Phong Saly (3 males, 2 females); TONGKING: Laichau Province: 37.5 mi. ENE. of Phong Saly (1 male, 1 female), Muong Moun (1 male), Muong Boum (1 male, 1 female); Laokay Province: Ban Nam Nhung (1 male), Ban Nam Da (2 males, 1 female), Pakha (1 male, 1 female).

Remarks.—Delacour has identified all populations from Indochine (Tongking, Laos, and Annam) as inseparable from *A. s. schwaneri* of Borneo. I have shown that two subspecies other than *schwaneri* occur in Laos and Tongking; specimens from southern Annam have not been seen, but it is very probable that still a third, perhaps undescribed, will be found there when good series are obtained.

6. *Abroscopus superciliaris schwaneri* (Blyth)

“*Abornis schwaneri* (Temm.)” Blyth, Ibis, ser. 2, vol. 6, Apr. 1870, p. 169 (“Borneo”; type specimen from Banjarmasin, South Borneo, *vide* Bowdler Sharpe, Catalogue of the Birds in the British Museum, vol. 4, 1879, p. 403).

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. albigularis* of Sikkim, but with the whole crown dark brownish gray, scarcely washed with olive green, and much more clearly demarcated from the color of the remaining upperparts; the nape and mantle deep olive-green.

From *A. s. euthymus*, separable by superior size (wing length: 51-56 mm., against 45-52 mm.) and, especially in fresh plumaged specimens, by the brownish cast to the dark gray of the crown.

Wing length.—52-55 mm., once 48 mm. (12); 51-56 mm. (5, *vide* Robinson and Boden Kloss, Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam, vol. 5, 1924, p. 243).

Specimens examined.—DUTCH BORNEO: Mount Tibang (1 male); SARAWAK: Mount Penrissen (1 male); BRITISH NORTH BORNEO: Mount Kinabalu (5 males, 1 female, 4 unsexed).

Remarks.—Since no specimens have been seen from anywhere near the type locality, I have been compelled to follow Finsch (Notes from the Leyden Museum, vol. 26, 1905, pp. 62-63) in the assumption that birds from the northern mountains are the same as those of the southern lowlands. Critical comparison of long series from North and South would be desirable.

7. *Abroscopus superciliaris bambusarum*, subsp. nov.

Type.—Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia No. 127946, adult male, collected on Khao Phanom Bencha, peninsular Siam at lat. 8°15' N, long. 98°55' E, by collectors for Rodolphe Meyer de Schauensee (original number 44).

Diagnosis.—From *A. s. schwaneri*, as exemplified by specimens from northern Borneo, separable by having the crown a slightly paler brownish gray; the nape and mantle a still purer deep olive green, virtually free of oily or golden suffusion; and by inferior size (wing length: 45-51 mm., against 51-56 mm.).

From *A. s. euthymus*, separable only by the brownish cast to the dark gray of the crown and the still purer deep olive-green of the nape and mantle, virtually free of oily or golden suffusion.

From *A. s. superciliaris*, separable by the slightly darker grey of the crown and the much deeper olive-green of the nape and mantle.

Wing length.—49-51 mm. (2); mm. (14, *vide* Robinson and Boden Kloss, Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam, vol. 5, 1924, p. 243).

Specimens examined.—SIAM: Peninsula: Khao Phanom Bencha (2 males).

Remarks.—Robinson and Boden Kloss (*loc. cit.*) recognized the existence in the northern Malay Peninsula of a race differing from *schwaneri* in lesser size and pointed out, not quite correctly, that "there are no colour distinctions."

Stuart Baker (Fauna of British India, Birds, ed. 2, vol. 8, 1930, p. 644) observed that "the Southern Tenasserim bird seems to me to be nearer *schwaneri* than *superciliaris*. For the present I shall retain it under that name, though it may eventually have to be separated under yet another name as intermediate between the Northern and Bornean forms."

Chasen (Handlist of Malaysian Birds, 1935, p. 253, footnote 1) pointed out that "the birds I here call *A. s. superciliaris* are like *schwaneri* in colour but larger [*sic* = smaller]: they are therefore perhaps not true *superciliaris*, but intermediate, or an undescribed race."

A. s. bambusarum is in fact very distinct from *superciliaris*, but stands extraordinarily close to the geographically much more remote *euthymus*. It ranges from the type locality north at least as far as the Isthmus of Kra. A single specimen from Khao Soi Dao (lat. 7°20' N) cannot be distinguished from a series of *A. s. saikaiorum*.

8. *Abroscopus superciliaris saikaiorum* (Stresemann)

Abornis saikaiorum Stresemann, Bull. Brit. Orn. Club, vol. 31, Dec. 27, 1912, p. 27 (Upper Batang-Padang Valley [Cameron's Highlands], elev. 3,000 ft., Perak-Pahang Boundary, Malaya).

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. schwaneri*, as exemplified by specimens from northern Borneo, but with the crown a slightly paler brownish gray; the nape and mantle a still purer deep olive-green, virtually free of oily or golden suffusion; the yellow rump band (when present) and the posterior underparts a paler canary yellow, this effect heightened by the strong tendency toward a fairly extensive mesial area of white on the abdomen.

From *A. s. bambusarum*, separable only by the presence of the white mesial area on the abdomen.

Wing length.—46-53 mm. (9); 50-55 mm. (11, *vide* Robinson and Boden Kloss, Journ. Nat. Hist. Soc. Siam, vol. 5, 1924, p. 243).

Specimens examined.—SIAM: Peninsula: Khao Soi Dao (1 male); MALAYA: Perak-Pahang Boundary: Telom (1 male); Selangor-Pahang Boundary: Semangko Pass (1 male, 1 female, 1 unsexed); Selangor: Ginting Bidei (2 males, 2 females).

Remarks.—*Abroscopus sakaiorum* was described from a unique specimen, which lacked "all trace of yellow on the underparts and of greenish on the upperparts." Stresemann himself later (Nov. Zool., vol. 27, 1920, p. 502) surmised that it represented a mere color variety of the Malayan race of *Abroscopus supercilii*, which is known to be common at Cameron's Highlands. Until the contrary is shown to be the case, his name must be used.

Robinson and Boden Kloss (*loc. cit.*) found *sakaiorum* to have a longer wing than the form I have called *bambusarum*, but this distinction does not appear in my series.

9. *Abroscopus supercilii* *papilio*, subsp. nov.

Type.—Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia No. 140013, adult female, collected at Medan, Deli District, northern Sumatra, on May 19, 1939, by Sidney Dillon Ripley (original number 1031).

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. schwaneri*, as exemplified by specimens from northern Borneo, but with the nape and mantle a still purer deep olive-green, virtually free of oily or golden suffusion; the yellow of the rump band (rarely present) and the posterior underparts a paler canary yellow, this effect heightened by the great development of the white mesial area on the abdomen.

From *A. s. sakaiorum*, separable by the other deeper brownish gray of the crown; the darker olive-green of the nape and mantle; and the greater extent of the white mesial area on the abdomen.

From *A. s. bambusarum*, separable by the rather darker brownish gray of the crown; the deeper olive-green of the nape and mantle; the presence of an extensive white mesial area on the abdomen; and by greater size (wing length: 53-54 mm., against 45-51 mm.).

Wing length.—53-54 mm. (2).

Specimens examined.—SUMATRA: North: Mount Korinchi (1 male), Medan (1 female).

Remarks.—It is admittedly rash to name a race of this species on but two specimens. The Sumatran birds seen, however, do not agree with any of the form discussed above, and since this warbler has now been shown to exhibit racial variation in all other areas where such might be expected to occur, it would be very astonishing if the Sumatran populations were not also distinct.

10. *Abroscopus supercilii* *vordermani* (Büttikofer)

Cryptolopha Vordermani Büttikofer, Notes from the Leyden Museum, vol. 15, Note 36, July 1893, p. 260 (East Java; type specimen from the Ijang Mountains, near Banjuwangi, Besuki Residency, East Java, *vide* Junge, in *epist.* of Nov. 26, 1946).

Diagnosis.—Similar to *A. s. schwaneri*, as exemplified by specimens from northern Borneo, but with only the incipient dark brownish gray,

this part not clearly demarcated from the dull olive-green of the occiput, nape, and mantle; the rump band (rarely present) and the posterior underparts dull creamy yellow, with a great development of the white mesial area on the abdomen.

From all other races, equally readily separable by the washed-out colors of the upperparts and underparts.

Wing length.—51.54 mm. (3).

Specimens examined.—JAVA: West: Mount Gedeh (2 males), Mount Guntur (2 unsexed).

Remarks.—The original description of this race is very misleading: Büttikofer's unique specimen was said to have the upperparts "lively yellowish green" and the posterior under surface "bright yellow." Dr. G. C. A. Junge of the Rijksmuseum at Leiden has courteously examined the type for me, and writes that these parts are, in fact, as described above.

The four examples before me from West Java have the upperparts a dull olivaceous-brown, washed with fulvous on the rump, and thus do not agree with the type. While for the present I place them under Büttikofer's name, there is a possibility that in West Java (and southern Sumatra?) we shall find a race distinct from *vordermani* of East Java.